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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8723  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2298  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2496  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5650  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1143

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 000962

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, SA/PAB, S/CT,  
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD

E.O. 12958 N/A  
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/LASHKAR GAH - SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO  
UPCOMING ERADICATION CAMPAIGN

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Helmand Governor Engineer Daud told PRToffs on February 28th that adequate security is a prerequisite to successful poppy eradication. Strong coordination is needed among the Afghan National Police (ANA) and Afghan National Army (ANA). To minimize alienation of the local population, Cash for Work (CFW) is essential, especially for the poorest farmers. The Governor expressed disappointment with the number of potential CFW recipients. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) PDAS Shweik also paid a visit to Helmand on the even of the commencement of the Helmand poppy eradication campaign. See septel for a report of that visit.

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SECURITY IS PARAMOUNT  
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3. (SBU) Governor Daud said that during his mission to Kabul during the week of February 22, he explained to senior Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior (MOI) officials that in Helmand eradication is complex due to the ongoing "terrorist" insurgency. Security is the key to a successful eradication campaign. If insurgents/drug lords succeed in driving off the eradication forces in one district, this will negatively impact eradication efforts in other districts. As the

Governor stated, "we must have security before poppy eradication."

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SECURITY COORDINATION: A MAJOR CHALLENGE  
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14. (SBU) The Governor said that coordination among the security forces is very important. He told us that he received promises in Kabul of significant augmentation of security, including 700 police (400 from the Afghan Eradication Force - AEF - and 300 ANA) as well as 500 local auxiliary police hired on a temporary basis. (Note: The campaign cannot begin until all forces are in place and coordination mechanisms established, according to an American contracted advisor to the AEF. End Note.) The Governor also said that within "a day or two," a Joint Provincial Coordination Center (PCC) should be up and running. The Governor was not aware of plans for relief forces, medical evacuations, and overall command structure, but said it was up to the ANP and ANA to establish these.

15. (SBU) Discussing the logistical challenges of positioning significant forces in distant areas, the Governor said that the various units should be responsible for their own logistics. He also expressed concern that logistics for the local ANP were not in place. He said that he is working with a senior ANP officer to rectify this problem. Similarly, he said that it is up to the ANP and ANA to coordinate on setting up adequate security in eradication sites. (Note: The operations plan being worked by OSC-A and the GOA calls for the ANA

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to provide an "outer ring" of security for the AEF, which will probably consist of a blocking force at the southern end of the area of operations. The ANP is to provide an "inner ring" of security in the area of operations, which will include the establishment of checkpoints along the road and crowd control in the vicinity of the poppy fields. Security at the poppy fields and the AEF Forward Base Camp will be provided by AEF personnel. End Note.)

16. (SBU) Concerning the auxiliary ANP forces, the Governor said that there are "special funds" established to provide for their logistics and transportation. The MOI will provide uniforms and weapons. (Note: OSC-A briefed in a March 3 countdown meeting that its Police Reform Directorate (PRD) would be providing uniforms, weapons, ammunition, and pay to the auxiliary police forces. End Note.) Concerning Coalition involvement, the Governor requested air support and/or flyovers on an as needed basis. (Note: These will be coordinated through Task Force Storm at Kandahar Air Field to preclude any conflict in airspace with the INL helicopters providing direct support to the AEF. End Note.)

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CASH FOR WORK A CRITICAL ELEMENT  
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17. (SBU) In describing the need for CFW, Governor Daud said that there are essentially two types of farmers in Helmand. One type includes those who live near the Helmand River irrigation system (built by USAID in the 1960s). While the system is in various states of disrepair, it is still a key part of Helmand's agriculture (and poppy cultivation). However, there are many farmers who live in areas

not covered by the irrigation system, especially in the far northern and southern areas of Helmand. These farmers must pump water, thus making profitability more problematic. This also increases the incentive for cultivating poppy, due to its relatively high return. These are the farmers that require the CFW most critically, the Governor stated. (Note: INL and the British Embassy Drugs Team (BEDT) have agreed upon target prioritization criteria which will direct eradication efforts primarily against 1) poppy fields directly benefiting from irrigation projects, 2) poppy fields exceeding one hectare (2.5 acres) in size, and 3) poppy fields being grown on government-owned land. End Note.)

18. (SBU) Governor Daud also expressed disappointment with the number of recipients planned under the CFW support from USAID and BEDT. The Governor's plan requested CFW for about 23,000 farmers presumably affected by eradication; yjr USAID and BEDT plan will assist approximately 7,000 farmers. Although less than the Governor proposed, the USAID/UK plan will employ 1,000 people in each of the seven districts north of the ring road (with the exception of the sparsely populated Washer

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District where 300 people will be employed) for a strong show of GOA commitment to provide its people with assistance during this difficult time. An official with experience in CFW also expressed concern that the neediest farmers will actually receive the necessary assistance, due to potential corruption at the local level. USAID ALP South partner Chemonics will ensure financial accountability in addition to infrastructure design and quality while letting the GOA be the face on the ground for implementation. Details on USAID's CFW program in anticipation of the large eradication campaign are reported septel. Given the operational limitations of AEF manual and mechanical eradication capabilities, typical field sizes, and the short duration of the eradication season (March-April), it is unlikely that more than 10,000 farmers will lose their poppy crops to AEF activity, if that.

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COMMENT  
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19. (SBU) There are clearly many moving parts to the upcoming eradication campaign as well as a number of open issues concerning the security elements. In addition, the ANA and ANP do not have a strong history of coordination. In fact, this operation is being billed as the first joint police-military operation of the current government of Afghanistan. With greater than half the world's poppy crop being grown within Helmand Province this year, the success or failure of this eradication campaign will determine the success or failure of Afghanistan's narcotics control efforts for 2006.

NEUMANN